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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4431
INFO RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 4152
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 7817
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 9611
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 6236
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 7760
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 7538
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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: MINOR LEAK AT ANGRA II NUCLEAR REACTOR; NO SERIOUS HARM CAUSED; NO CHANGES IN POLICIES OR PRACTICES

REF: RIO 131

(U) THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED AND NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Brazilian National Commission on Nuclear Energy (CNEN) reported that a minor accident at the Angra II nuclear reactor on May 15 led to a small leak of low levels of radiation. CNEN tell Post that they have reviewed the situation and have decided to maintain the current policies and practices unchanged. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On May 26, CNEN publicly announced - and later confirmed for Post - that a minor accident had occurred on May 15 at Brazil's Angra II nuclear energy reactor located at Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro (REFTEL). NOTE: The Ministry of Exterior Relations' Director of the Division of Disarmament and Sensitive Technologies Santiago Mourao told Environment, Science, Health and Technology (ESTH) Counselor that CNEN had informed the IAEA of the incident shortly after it occurred, though CNEN waited almost ten days to tell the public. END NOTE. The accident occurred after a janitor inadvertently left open the door to a decontamination room, which allowed a small quantity of low level radiation to leak out of the reactor. CNEN reported that six employees at the reactor were exposed to low levels of radiation that were below 0.1% of what CNEN standards allow for individual contamination. These employees, however, did undergo decontamination procedures (such as thoroughly cleaning their bodies, hands, feet, and uniforms), and successfully passed through a contamination detector. Subsequently, CNEN determined that these employees did not face any significant health threats from this exposure. CNEN said that only low levels of radiation escaped the facility. According to their measurements the amount that escaped was below 0.2% of what CNEN standards allow for contamination of the outside environment.

¶3. (SBU) CNEN reports that the accident was a Level 1 Event based on the International Atomic Energy Association's (IAEA) classification scale. That scale ranks nuclear accidents on a scale of 0 to 7. A Level 0 Event poses no significant threat to overall safety, while a Level 7 event poses serious threats to public health and the environment. According to the IAEA, a Level 1 Event is considered an "anomaly" in which measures and procedures intended to prevent an accident failed to do so. CNEN described the accident as an "unusual event."

¶4. (SBU) Dr. Leonam Guimaraes, an Advisor to the President of Eletronuclear (the operator of Angra II), informed ESTH Counselor that they consider this a minor incident and an "unusual event." Accordingly, Eletronuclear does not plan to alter any of its safety procedures or practices. Similarly, Viviane Simoes, an analyst in CNEN's International Relations Office, told ESTH Counselor that CNEN

has concluded that existing preventative measures are satisfactory.

SOBEL